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SUBJECT: UNGA SECOND COMMITTEE - U.S. PROMOTES
CYBERSECURITY AND LEGAL EMPOWERMENT FOR POOR, CONSENSUS ON
KEY DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Summary

¶1. (SBU) The UN General Assembly completed action December 24 on the last of the 46 draft resolutions and decisions for the 2009 session of the Second (Economic and Financial) Committee, notably achieving consensus results on all but six. USUN approached the committee's work with intensified engagement, particularly with developing country delegations, and achieved some notable successes, including the adoption of a U.S.-sponsored resolution on cybersecurity. U.S. diplomacy was key in making progress on difficult macroeconomic resolutions and winning adoption of our co-sponsored resolution on "Legal Empowerment of the Poor." Overall, we succeeded in reducing the number of voted resolutions in which the U.S. was in a small minority relative to the past 2-4 years. Despite the U.S. contribution to an improved atmosphere in the 2nd Committee, fractiousness within the large G77 bloc of developing states significantly delayed the work of the Committee, a trend that is likely to continue. Looking to the new year, USUN is already working with inter-agency partners in advance of the September 2010 three-day High-Level UN Event on the Millennium Development Goals. End summary.

A Busy Session

¶2. (U) The Second Committee (2C) in the 64th General Assembly, in taking action on 44 documents (in addition to several oral decisions), matched historic high workloads reached previously only in the 60th and 57th General Assemblies. In keeping with the Committee's prevailing culture, all but six of the resolutions and decisions were adopted by consensus, with the U.S. opposing or abstaining on five of those six voted documents. The U.S. was in a small

minority on just three votes, which is consistent with overall numbers from the past 13 years, but sharply reduced from our record 2-4 years ago (in the 60th session, for instance, the U.S. was in a small minority on 10 votes in the 2nd Committee). The General Assembly adopted the bulk of this year's 2C resolutions on December 21, and adopted the final two resolutions in the early morning hours of December 24.

13. (U) The U.S. continued to oppose the perennially voted and unbalanced resolutions on "Permanent Sovereignty of the Palestinian People over Natural Resources" (8 other states voted "no"), "Oil Slick on Lebanese Shores" (7 other states joined us in opposing), and "Unilateral Coercive Economic Measures" (2 other states also voted "no"), and we joined 46 other developed states in also opposing the "Trade" resolution and abstained with 49 others on the Cuban-sponsored "New International Economic Order" resolution. With negotiations on most resolutions beginning unusually late in the session, USUN was stretched to the maximum in handling this number of negotiations in such a short timeframe, and could not have succeeded without invaluable TDY support from IO, EEB, and INR/Cyber.

Highlights

14. (U) The 2C resolutions are scattered among a dozen different agenda items, mostly falling under the broad

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categories of: sustainable development, macro-economics, globalization, poverty, agricultural development, countries in special situations, and operational activities. The more notable of these resolutions and negotiations are summarized below.

15. (U) Cybersecurity: Almost all draft resolutions in the 2C are introduced by the G77 group of developing countries, but this year the U.S. took the lead in introducing a resolution entitled "Creation of a global culture of cybersecurity and taking stock of national efforts to protect critical information infrastructures," which was adopted by consensus on December 21 with the co-sponsorship of a diverse group of 39 other member states representing nearly every geographic group. The main purpose of this resolution was to disseminate a voluntary self-assessment tool that member states could use in evaluating their national cybersecurity infrastructures, while also inviting states to share best practices, noting the vital importance of information systems to international trade and development. The U.S. had last sponsored cybersecurity-related resolutions in the 2C in 2002 and 2003, and this year's effort was led by INR/Cyber in keeping with the U.S. Government's renewed focus on the topic.

16. (SBU) Legal Empowerment of the Poor: The U.S. joined 70 other co-sponsors of this resolution, which was first adopted in the GA during the 63rd session. The work of a Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, formed under the auspices of the UN Development Program and including the participation of former Secretary of State Albright, served as the resolution's initial inspiration. Although the draft text enjoyed wide co-sponsorship, including among Latin states, it came under fire from fringe "Bolivarian" delegations (Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Cuba) as well as China and Egypt, with the Bolivarians seeking to shift the focus of the resolution away from "rule of law" and to an indictment of "predatory" capitalism. When the prospect of a possible contested vote on the resolution caused some co-sponsors to waver, the U.S. delegation worked successfully with Brazil, the EU and other co-sponsors to defend the core elements of the resolution. Just two days before scheduled action on the resolution in the 2nd Committee, the Bolivarian opposition signaled it would join consensus and other reticent delegations quickly followed suit. In future, however, this

resolution will be negotiated as a General Assembly plenary item rather than within the 2nd Committee. (Note: Topics that do not fit neatly within the subject matter of a single Main Committee are often treated as GA Plenary items. Many delegations held the view that the Legal Empowerment of the Poor resolution dealt with topics related to three different Main Committees of the GA (2nd, 6th and 3rd), and therefore decided to place the resolution as a GA Plenary item henceforth. End note.)

17. (SBU) Agricultural Technology for Development: This resolution was first adopted two years ago under the primary sponsorship of Israel, as part of an effort both to raise the profile of a topic highly relevant to ongoing food security discussions as well as to raise a non-politicized profile for Israel in the 2C. Although a number of Arab states called a vote on the resolution in the 62nd General Assembly, there were hopes that it would garner a less politicized reception this year, since it was co-sponsored by 89 states (including the U.S.). The U.S. delegation was active in lobbying for support, particularly among African delegations. Unfortunately, when the 2C took action on the resolution, the Arab Group once again called a vote, and the number of states abstaining actually grew (primarily because Bolivarian

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delegations joined the Arab Group in abstaining), and the number of states voting in favor of the resolution was 13 fewer (in part due to higher absenteeism, including among co-sponsors). Vote totals improved when the General Assembly took action December 21, however, as the resolution was adopted by a vote of 146 (U.S.)-1-32. (Note: While this total is similar to the outcome two years ago, four states claimed balloting errors that would have changed the vote outcome to 143-1-36. Somalia is the lone delegation that voted "no".)

18. (SBU) Macroeconomic Issues: The resolution on "International Trade and Development" has defied consensus in the 2nd Committee since 2003, largely in light of continuing north-south divisions that have frustrated efforts to complete the Doha round negotiations in the World Trade Organization. Nevertheless, negotiations on the draft resolution in this session had a promising start, with key delegations (including the U.S.) demonstrating maximum flexibility in order to achieve consensus. On the final day of negotiations, the U.S. proposed a compromise package that was endorsed by the EU, Brazil and India. But a hard-line minority of G77 members (led by Egypt) blocked consensus, leading once again to a voted resolution. More moderate G77 members were successful in working with the EU and the U.S. to shape consensus outcomes on other key macroeconomic resolutions, including on Debt, Commodities, Financing for Development and the International Financial System (IFS). The IFS negotiations were the very last to finish in the 2C, requiring late-night sessions and high-level lobbying to bring to a successful close. Delegates from a number of developing countries praised USUN for its leadership role in bridging gaps during the negotiations. Briefings over recent months for UN member states by Deputy National Security Advisor Michael Froman on the work of the G20 in addressing the global financial crisis paid important dividends in these negotiations.

19. (SBU) Climate Change, Sustainable Development: The annual 2C resolution "Protection of global climate for present and future generations" broke little new rhetorical or substantive ground in the sensitive weeks prior to the UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (December 7-18), despite laborious and divisive negotiations. The 2C nevertheless managed to achieve a consensus outcome, and both Secretary-General Ban and GA President Treki expressed their appreciation for the late-night negotiations that allowed the GA to adopt the resolution on December 7, the first day of the Copenhagen Conference. Another key resolution achieving a consensus outcome, entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21,"

set the stage for a United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 in Brazil, marking the 20th anniversary of the Rio "Earth Summit" of 1992. The U.S. and other WEOG members successfully argued that building a "green economy" should be a key theme of the 2012 Conference, overcoming strong opposition from Russia and G77 members.

Fringe Factions Causing Trouble

¶10. (SBU) Not only did the 2C face a historically high workload this year, but it was further burdened by a reduced calendar in which to complete its work because of divisions within the G77 group of over 130 developing countries and China. The G77 present the first draft of nearly every recurring resolution in the 2C, but this year the group missed deadlines for the submission of texts--in most cases

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by 2-3 weeks (out of a total negotiation calendar of just five weeks). According to G77 delegates, the Group had difficulty coordinating its position on the draft resolutions in part because the delegation of Sudan, which currently chairs the G77, was left shorthanded by the demands of parallel international climate change negotiations leading to Copenhagen. But other key factors were sharp differences within the group and a lack of firm leadership to mold consensus. In numerous cases, "fringe" factions (often led by Egypt, Venezuela, Cuba, Nicaragua and Bolivia) were as troublesome within the G77 as they were in the formal negotiations, leading powerful G77 delegations like India and Brazil to become exasperated with the antics. Ultimately, G77-originated delays forced the 2nd Committee to conclude its work 15 days later than planned, despite a heightened tempo of negotiations. With Yemen taking over the G77 chairmanship in January for 2010, UN delegates are divided in their predictions whether Yemen will face similar or greater problems at the G77 helm in the 65th GA, or be able to do marginally better. Among the showcase events of the 65th GA will be a 3-day High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, as negotiated by the current GA. USUN is already working with inter-agency partners in preparing for that high-profile event, which takes place immediately before the start of the GA's General Debate in September 2010.
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